



**NORTH DAKOTA**  
DEPARTMENT *of* HEALTH

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## NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release:  
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### **Livestock Owners Urged To Take Precautions Against Contracting Anthrax**

BISMARCK, N.D. – The North Dakota Department of Health encourages livestock owners who suspect anthrax infection in their animals to take precautions to protect themselves from the disease, according to State Epidemiologist Kirby Kruger.

Anthrax cases in livestock continue to be reported to the State Veterinarian. Anthrax is caused by animals consuming anthrax spores, which can lie dormant in the ground for decades and become active under ideal soil and weather conditions. Animals then are exposed to the disease when they consume food or water contaminated with the bacteria. Recent heavy rains and flooding in much of North Dakota have created prime conditions for anthrax.

“Although the risk of people acquiring anthrax while working with anthrax-infected animals is low, it’s important that livestock owners protect themselves from contracting the disease,” Kruger said. “If you think you have been exposed, you should contact your doctor.”

The Department of Health recommends that livestock owners take the following precautions when working with potentially infected animals:

- Avoid contact with the animal’s body fluids.
- Wear boots and rubber gloves to protect skin from exposure to potentially contaminated carcasses and soil.
- Wash hands and exposed skin thoroughly after working with animals.
- Do not eat the meat of animals suspected of dying from anthrax.
- Do not conduct post-mortem exams of animals suspected of dying from the disease.
- Burn carcasses on site.

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Rarely spread from person to person, human anthrax can affect the skin, lungs or digestive tract. Cutaneous, or anthrax infecting the skin, is the most common form of the disease in humans. People who have been exposed to anthrax-infected livestock should see their health-care provider if they have any of the following symptoms:

- Flu-like symptoms, such as sore throat, cough, chest discomfort and muscle aches
- Diarrhea, bloody diarrhea and fever
- Solid, raised blisters, ulcers or sores on the skin that turn black in the center after two to six days

For more information, contact Kirby Kruger, state epidemiologist, at 701.328.4549.

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